



# Stephen Kreisler

Franchise Owner

Salad Creations – Clifton Park – [www.saladcreations.net](http://www.saladcreations.net)

## Success Magazine: How do you define success?

*Stephen Kreisler: I feel that having the ability and means to follow your dreams and experience what life has to offer is what personal success is. In business, exceeding expectations is the key to developing and maintaining success. No matter your line of work, the most important aspect is customer service.*

## SM: What sparked your decision to open a Salad Creations franchise?

SK: I have looked into many other concepts, but with Salad Creations I saw an opportunity to do something different. Salad Creations offers a fresh alternative to the normal fast food or fast casual concept.

## SM: Had you ever owned a business before?

SK: This is my first owned business. I have worked for other entrepreneurs and franchise concepts in the past, and gained a tremendous amount of knowledge.

## SM: What did you do prior to opening Salad Creations?

SK: I have worked for Mc Donald's, Brinker International, and Cosi and K.C. Masterpiece Barbeque and Grill. Most recently, I was a recruiter for numerous restaurant concepts throughout the U.S.

## SM: How has your previous work experience prepared you for success as a leader?

SK: The ability to identify what needs to change, and the knowledge needed to adapt has been an important part of the learning process for me. I have gone through changes with companies that were absolute successes and others that were total failures. But as long as you move forward from your mistakes, it is all a learning experience.

## SM: When did your Clifton Park Salad Creations open for business?

SK: We opened the second week of September.

## SM: There are many franchise opportunities out there. What was it about Salad Creations that stood out for you?

SK: Salad Creations focuses on the healthy aspect of life. We all need to eat healthier by making wiser choices. It is a concept that I believe in, and that I feel will explode in many locations over the next few years. Another reason why Salad Creations stood out was the total investment cost versus other concepts.

rewarding, and very challenging. The first location of any concept in a new area is always a learning experience.

## SM: In what ways do you think opening a franchise is easier than starting a business from scratch? Are there any ways in which it is more difficult?

SK: When you purchase a franchise, you are buying a system. This system has already been tried in other places, and it works. All you need to do is follow those systems. You cannot pick and choose which ones you want to do, you need to do them all, and to the best of your ability. Companies like Salad Creations have invested the time, energy, and money to make sure their systems work. Will they have changes down the road? Absolutely, but you need to make changes as a company and not as an individual operator.

## SM: Were you able to choose your location? If so, why did you choose the particular location that you did?

SK: We were able to choose our specific location. As the Area Developer, I have a map of our region with demographics for over 40 potential locations. Clifton Park polled on the high end of most of those areas.

## SM: Are there any other Salad Creations in New York?

SK: Currently, no. Clifton Park is the first location in the state. We have plans to

develop 50 stores in our geographic region by 2015.

## SM: Who has been your mentor throughout this process?

SK: My mother, first and foremost, for her dedication to her children, her spirit to succeed, and her never fail attitude. She taught me that with perseverance, you can achieve anything. As far as business goes, I would have to say Lee Wagdy. He was the first franchise owner that I worked for with Mc Donald's. One day when I was a General Manager of one of his units, he told me that being successful was a matter of being committed to the goals you set, but also making those goals achievable. He and his family ran an amazing company that has grown over the years to more than 30 locations in the Kansas City area.

## SM: What types of items are on your menu?

SK: We offer salads, wrap sandwiches, and soups. With our salads, we really focus on the "create your own" model. This allows our guests to choose from over 40 ingredients for one price, the only additional cost would be if you add meat. We also offer all of our salads in two different sizes, the full creation and the smaller junior creation. We have seven different wrap sandwiches, and we offer four soups a day.

## SM: What do you think is the most important element to having a successful business?

SK: Having an achievable plan that maps out all options along the way. You need to

stick to your plan, and adapt as dictated by the ever changing business environment. But the most important thing is taking care of your guests' needs and expectations. Anticipate what your customer needs before they do, and you will have a guest for life. Make them feel like they are welcome, and sincerely thank them each and every time for their patronage.

## SM: What has been the most challenging aspect of this initial startup phase?

SK: The unknown. I have worked in many concepts, and opened over 30 new stores, but every one of them offers different challenges along the way. You need to be able to make quick and precise decisions to stay on course and work toward that final goal.

## SM: When faced with adversity, how do you personally work to overcome it?

SK: I believe you face adversity every day. You have to believe in yourself, have the inner strength to overcome any adverse issues, and be honest with all parties

involved. You cannot take everything that is directed at you as an individual. We deal with many different types of people daily, and hopefully we all can learn from each other and make our own lives better, as well as someone else's.

## SM: What advice would you give to someone considering a franchise opportunity?

SK: I would suggest doing your homework on any concept, making phone calls, and researching anyway you can. You need to make sure that you are making that move for all of the right reasons. If you think it is all about the money, I would say you are wrong. Money is a big part of it, but I believe that owning your own company and making decisions that affect you and your family is the best part of it. You really become your own CEO.

## SM: What is your five year plan for Salad Creations?

SK: Our plan is actually for seven years. We anticipate being able to sell several franchises this year and then between four or five next year. After that, we believe we can double the amount of franchise sales each year until 2014. Within two years, we should be concentrating on the area development aspect of the business and either have a partner or manager take over the day to day operations of our Clifton Park location. We also have plans to build several more of our own locations in the Capital Region in the next couple of years.

## SM: If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be?

SK: I would have to say "resilient."

“Salad Creations offers a fresh alternative to the normal fast food or fast casual concept.”

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## SM: What has the process of opening a franchise been like for you?

SK: We have gone through about eight months of planning. The last two months working on site everyday, and the last several weeks making sure that we execute operations correctly. It has been very

